



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN HAMPTON
SIXTEENTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 4044
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

CAPITOL: 860-240-8585
TOLL FREE: 800-842-8267
FAX: 860-240-0206
E-MAIL: JOHN.HAMPTON@cga.ct.gov

MEMBER
AGING COMMITTEE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

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Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, Senator Maynard, Representative Albis, Senator Chapin, Representative Shaban and distinguished members of the Environment Committee.

I am State Representative John Hampton from the 16th District (Simsbury) and I am testifying in support of **HB 5424, An Act Concerning the Responsibilities of the Water Planning Council**.

First and foremost, I would like to thank you for giving this bill a public hearing.

HB 5424 is a major step towards a comprehensive and dynamic statewide strategic plan for the supply, distribution, quality, protection, conservation, and administration/oversight of one of the state's most vital resources – **our water**.

This legislation was crafted utilizing the recommendations that came from the Water Subcommittees that were convened earlier this year after the first ever Connecticut Water Summit, which brought together major stakeholders to address this vital issue—they included legislators from both side of the aisle—*many in this room*—agencies, environmental groups, academics, business leaders and water providers.

I wish to thank Representatives Mushinsky, Albis, Miller, Steinberg, and Rojas, for their great service as chairs of the three subcommittees, 1.) *Supply & Distribution* 2.) *Quality, Protection, & Conservation*, and 3.) *Administration, Infrastructure & Oversight*.

We had a wealth of talent and expertise on the subcommittees working collaboratively on this initiative. Each member provided their unique experience and perspective and for that we are extremely grateful.

I'd also like to give special thanks to the University of Connecticut for adding their support to this effort through their representation on a subcommittee and through a very successful water conference last month. Their contributions greatly enhanced our efforts.

I would like to recognize the hardworking folks of the Water Planning Council who have been diligently striving toward a statewide water plan but lack the tools and resources that they need to fulfill their mission. The Water Utility Coordinating Committees (WUCCs), which are charged with creating regional plans for resolving supply problems in various regions of the state, also need more support to complete their prescribed charge.

The consensus recommendations from the subcommittees resulted in the legislation before you that does the following:

Sec. 1 - Updates the Water Planning Council statute to require the group produce a state water plan, with stakeholder input, by January, 1 2017. The plan must be submitted to the legislature for approval before the Water Planning Council implements it and the group must report to this and other committees of cognizance on its progress annually beginning in 2015.

Sec. 2 and 3 - Authorize the Department of Public Health to award grants for upgrades to drinking water systems.

Sec. 4 - Adds "environmental protection" to the list of items that Water Utility Coordinating Committee Plans must incorporate.

Sec. 5 – Updates DPH Water Utility Coordinating Committee consultant language.

Sec. 6 – Creates the DPH licensure category of licensed water professional, similar to Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's licensed environmental professional, to review water provider proposals and ensure their compliance with state and federal law.

Sec. 7 – Requires the councils of governments (COGs) to develop and implement a response plan when the Governor declares a major disaster due to drought.

Sec. 8 – Adds resources to the Water Planning Council and DPH to develop the statewide water plan and complete the remaining Water Utility Coordinating Committee plans.

The legislation addresses the multiple layers of water planning and takes into account key aspects, including conservation, water reuse, critical data collection, and permitting decisions, as well as the ecological, environmental and economic impact that implementation of a water plan will have on the state.

The pieces are in place to get the job done. This proposed legislation connects these pieces with resources to achieve their common objectives.

As state leaders, we work together to plan responsibly for the future—*for our children's education, public safety and transportation.*

Our water needs similar strategic visioning. This legislation will go a long way toward managing water resources in a sustainable manner in order to support the state's economy, protect public health and natural systems, and enhance the quality of life for all citizens.

Thank you again for your kind consideration and I welcome your questions.